

CLAIMS

1. A method of softening water, wherein hard water is
5 contacted with a container and containing one or more
water-softening agents able to bind calcium ions, the
container having an enclosing wall wherein at least
part, preferably all, of the wall is permeable to the
water and to components dissolved therein
10 characterised in that the product is stored and
removed prior to use from packaging having a moisture
vapour transmission rate of less than $30\text{g/m}^2/\text{day}$.
2. A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein at least one
15 water-softening agent is substantially water-
insoluble.
3. A method as claimed in claim 1 or 2 wherein the method
is a method used in a ware washing machine.
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4. A method as claimed in any claims from 1 to 3 wherein
at least one water-softening agent is a cation
exchange resin.
- 25 5. A water-softening product comprising a container
containing one or more water-softening agents, the
container having an enclosing wall which in at least
part, preferably all, of the wall is permeable to
water and to components dissolved in, the container
30 being held within a package having a moisture vapour
transmission rate of less than $30\text{g/m}^2/\text{day}$.

6. A water-softening product as claimed in claim 5 wherein at least one water-softening agent is water-soluble.
- 5 7. A water-softening product as claimed in claim 5 or 6 wherein the container is a flat container, preferably a sachet.
8. A water-softening product as claimed in claim 7
10 wherein the container wall comprises a sheet.
9. A water-softening product as claimed in claim 8 wherein the sheet is a woven or non-woven material.
- 15 10. A water-softening product as claimed in any claim from 5 to 9 wherein the packaging is formed from a sheet of flexible material.
11. A method of providing improved cleaning in a clothes
20 washing machine, wherein a product containing a substantially water-insoluble water softening agent, having a wall permeable to water and to metal ions therein but impermeable to the agent is located in the machine such that hard water flows through the
25 product, thereby effecting the softening of the water in the machine characterised in that the product is stored and removed prior to use from packaging having a MVTR of less than 30g/m²/day.